

Good Food For All

ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY THROUGH
HAWAII'S FOOD SYSTEM



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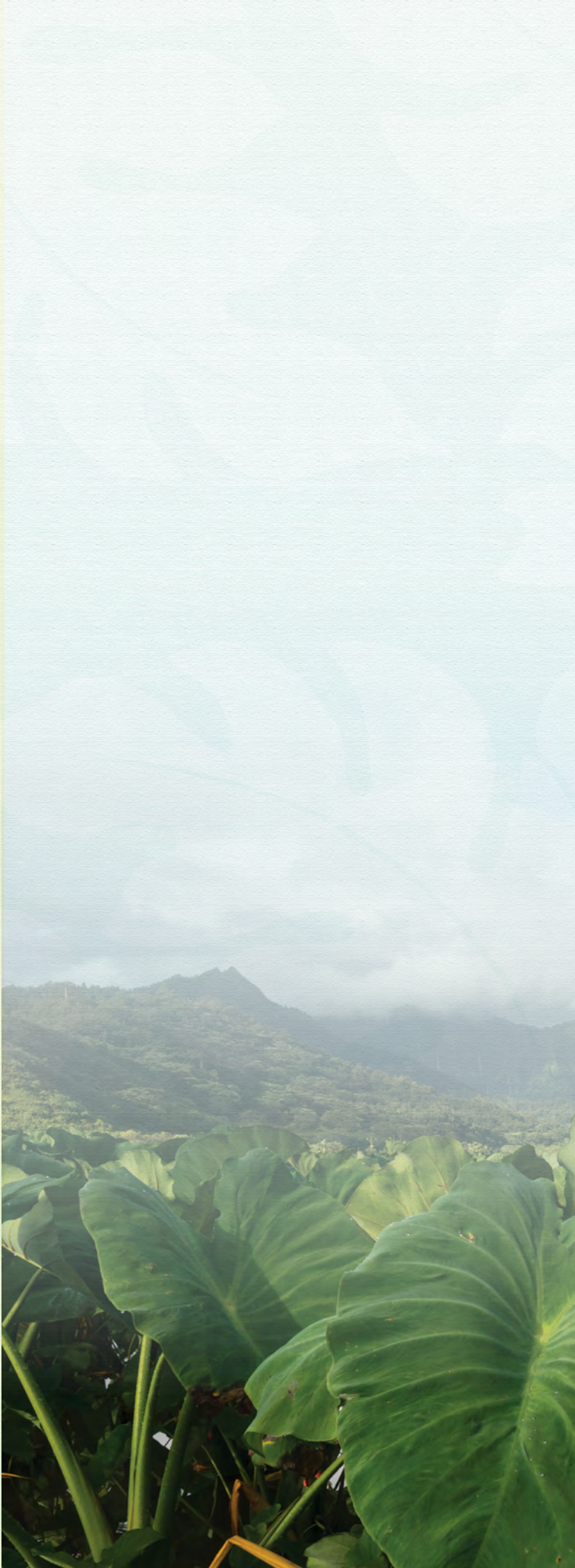
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Introduction

Across the United States, a movement is underway. Communities are striving to build new systems of food trade that prioritize resilience, health, and social justice. This movement is founded upon efforts to strengthen commercial and social networks and to build the local economy.

The document you are holding was distilled from a report of the same name.¹ The original report was completed by Ken Meter, food systems analyst and President of the Crossroads Resource Center, in 2017, after an analysis of economic data, a review of the literature, and dozens of interviews with food system practitioners and stakeholders from every major island. The full report can be found online at www.crcworks.org/hifood.pdf.

What the report found was that Hawai'i has been more proactive than most states in this movement. This is driven in part because civic leaders have recognized the state's vulnerability. Concerns over evidence that we import as much as 85-90% of our food are compounded by the islands' geographic isolation: Located more than 2,500 miles from its food supply, Hawai'i must take steps to produce more food close to home for community food security.²

*Strengthening
Hawai'i's
community food
system is a matter
of social justice.*

But disaster resilience is only part of the motivation for Hawai'i's leadership. Strengthening Hawai'i's community food system is also a matter of social justice. One in five island residents receives food assistance through Hawai'i's emergency food relief system, including nearly 50,000 children.³ Food donated through this system is often of poor nutritional quality with high sugar and fat content, which can lead to nutritional deficiencies and higher rates of obesity and chronic disease. It is no surprise then that low-income Hawai'i residents report poor health at nearly twice the rate of middle-class residents.⁴

The report's findings suggest that—while strengthening Hawai'i's community food system will require that we grow more food on the islands—it will also take the concerted efforts of civic leaders from diverse backgrounds to ensure that this food feeds those who need it most. This report offers suggestions for what such a system might look like and what it involves. It also explores some of the ways that Hawai'i is already leading this shift. Finally, it offers tangible recommendations—on both large and small scales—that can accelerate the transition to a food system that is more resilient, healthy, and just.



Food Insecurity in Hawai'i

Food insecurity refers to USDA's measure of lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods. Food-insecure households are not necessarily food insecure all the time. Food insecurity may reflect a household's need to make trade-offs between important basic needs, such as housing or medical bills, and purchasing nutritionally adequate foods. ~Feeding America, 2016

13% OF HAWAI'I POPULATION POPULATION IS FOOD INSECURE.⁵



1 in 4 CHILDREN LIVE IN HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVING FEDERAL ASSISTANCE (SNAP, SSL, OR OTHER PUBLIC ASSISTANCE).⁶



HAWAI'I HAS THE HIGHEST COST OF LIVING OF ALL 50 STATES.

FOOD COSTS ARE **61%** HIGHER THAN IN THE REST OF THE US.⁷



MAUI

"This is about more than emergency food relief. We are seeing families that just cannot get by without seeking food assistance. Usually it's the end of the month when [SNAP] benefits run low. The majority of the families are housed, many single parent households, multiple children, some work, some do not."

~Lynn Curtis, Director of Agency Relations for the Maui Food Bank

HAWAI'I ISLAND

"Many Puna residents don't have transportation, so to get to a pantry they have to walk from their simple shelter or tent as many as ten miles each way to get to a town. I've seen people walking while wearing a backpack, pushing a stroller with children or groceries inside, and carrying two plastic bags, all at the same time."

~Lenard Allen, Public Health Educator, East Hawai'i Department of Health



O'AHU

"An interesting snack trend gaining popularity among our Kalihi teens involves a packet of cherry-flavored Kool-Aid added to either a bag of "Hot" Cheetos or a package of pickled vegetables."

~ Lautamutafea Shen, Parent Community Network Coordinator, Dole Middle School

FOOD INSECURITY BY COUNTY^{8,9}



O'AHU

Below "livable wage"
(185% FPL)

199,233

Food Insecure
120,660



HAWAI'I ISLAND

Below "livable wage"
(185% FPL)

65,003

Food Insecure
25,690



MAUI COUNTY

Below "livable wage"
(185% FPL)

39,843

Food Insecure
19,310



KAUA'I COUNTY

Below "livable wage"
(185% FPL)

17,015

Food Insecure
8,190

BARRIERS TO FOOD ACCESS



HOUSING

For thousands of Hawai'i residents who have no home, or kitchens, or kitchen supplies, it is extremely difficult to find and store food on a regular basis. Some Hawai'i residents live completely off the grid, with no generators and no access to ice, so they have no place to store perishable items and limited ability to cook.



TRANSPORTATION

Lack of public transit is a major barrier to food access for residents of some parts of the islands. Even on O'ahu many low-income residents report difficulty carrying large bags of food on public transportation — especially if they must walk a long way to or from the bus stop. This limitation has convinced several pantries and food banks to offer delivery services or mobile markets.



TIME

Many family members work two or three jobs and have trouble scheduling a run to a grocery store or food pantry during the hours it is open.



SKILL

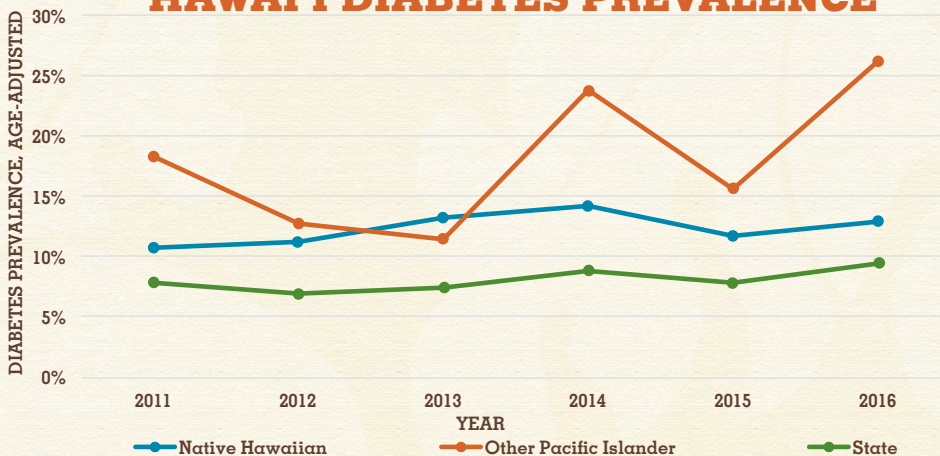
Many individuals simply lack the skills needed to prepare healthy meals. These include food prep and cooking, meal planning, basic nutrition, or shopping with a list or on a budget.



ISOLATION

Many residents are simply on their own, often realizing they have little power to shape the important forces in their lives, and often having no peer group that can support them in applying for benefits they might be eligible to receive.

HAWAI'I DIABETES PREVALENCE⁹



"Isolation from aspects of one's cultural practices has a negative effect on indigenous health, contributing to stress, trauma, and mental and physical health disparities when compared to other ethnic groups."



MICRONESIANS

The disruption of many Micronesian cultures (those who stem from the Pacific islands of Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, the Marshall Islands, and Palau) has led many to abandon traditional fishing and farming practices and to turn to commodity canned food items. Under the Compact of Free Association (COFA), these individuals can freely live, work, and study in the US. However, community members have expressed a deep concern about their disconnection from land and from sources of nutritious food, and the cultural dislocation many felt as migrants.



NATIVE HAWAIIANS

Native Hawaiians descend from a culture based on stewardship of 'āina: "that which nourishes us." However, the loss of land and language that began during the nineteenth century led to a disconnection from Hawaiian cultural practices. In many cases, imported and processed foods replaced traditional foods and growing practices that sustained Hawaiians for centuries. Cultural practitioners maintain that reclaiming these practices, and integrating them with new modes of exchange, is a critical step toward fostering abundance and recovering the community's health.

Hawai'i's Emergency Food Relief System

EMERGENCY FOOD SOURCES



DONATIONS

Surpluses from grocery stores and food manufacturers.

Pros: No cost, reduced food waste

Cons: Poor nutritional quality, food may be spoiled or unusable, food is grown and processed off-island, meaning high energy and shipping costs are imbedded in the value of the food

Common Items: Soda, chips, candy, canned protein



COMMUNITY FOOD DRIVES

All of Hawai'i's food banks solicit donations from community groups.

Pros: Builds community and awareness about food insecurity

Cons: Coordination can be inconsistent

Common Items: Canned goods, pasta, rice



GLEANING

When volunteer labor is available, gleaners might be sent into a farmer's field to harvest produce that the farmer does not have time, or staff, to harvest for themselves.

Pros: Food is higher nutritional quality, builds relationships with local farmers

Cons: Relies on volunteer labor, which is often inconsistent

Common Items: Pineapple, mango, starfruit, greens. Some prepared foods (in the case of Aloha Harvest)



USDA COMMODITIES

Food banks also rely upon donations from USDA's The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which funnels surplus commodities to food banks.

Pros: No cost

Cons: Limited to \$45 in value per recipient per month

Common Items: Staples such as rice or flour. Surpluses from commodity groups such as the cranberry growers, which donate cranberry concentrate, jellied cranberries, or dried fruit. Occasional meat or dairy products



DIRECT FARM PURCHASES

Pros: Greater purchasing choice, higher quality food, supports local farmers. Personal relationships with farmers mean that sometimes off-grade produce ("seconds") are donated separately

Cons: Shorter shelf life, lack of refrigeration space at pantries, preparation labor often required, food banks must pay market price to compete with other buyers, still not widely practiced in Hawai'i

Common Items: Zucchini, tomatoes, bananas, papaya, mushrooms



Kaua'i Independent Food Bank

200,000 pounds distributed annually

Hawai'i Food Bank – Kaua'i Branch

1.3 million pounds distributed annually

Hawai'i Food Bank – Honolulu Branch

12 million pounds distributed annually

Aloha Harvest

(prepared food)
2 million pounds of prepared food rescued and distributed

Maui Food Bank

2 million pounds distributed annually

The Food Basket

2 million pounds distributed annually

	No. of residents below 100% FPL ¹¹	Lbs. of food aid needed (annually in millions) ¹²
Hawai'i County	36,218	8.5
Honolulu County	93,765	22
Kaua'i County	6,763	1.6
Maui County	15,921	3.7

EMERGENCY FOOD ACCESS AND DISTRIBUTION



PANTRIES

The “standard” model of distribution: Pantries pay food banks up to 18¢ per pound of food and then distribute to clients free of charge. Pantries are often in faith-based institutions and have little to no refrigeration space.



BACKPACKS

Many food banks work through the schools to offer backpacks that have been prefilled with enough food for the child to eat six meals over the weekend.



IN-SCHOOL PANTRIES

Many parents are working so hard they do not have time to come to the pantry, but can be reached by catching them when they are at school to pick up their children.



KID'S CAFÉ

Maui Food Bank runs a program that offers complete meals to 1,000 homeless children each week through community organizations.



DIRECT DELIVERY AND CSA SHARES

Some food banks offer boxed portions of food similar to Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares. These might include fresh produce items or processed foods.



FOODS FOR SENIORS

Some food banks and pantries have programs that focus on seniors, who may require better nutrition as they age. Often these involve special deliveries of commodities or fresh produce to senior centers.



SUMMER MEALS

The Maui Food Bank and dozens of schools have instituted summer food programs. These summer meals help reach students when school is out of session.



SPECIAL HOLIDAY MEALS

Many pantries and food banks offer prepared meals for special occasions such as Thanksgiving. In addition to providing food, these gatherings reduce the isolation many low-income people experience.



DISASTER RELIEF

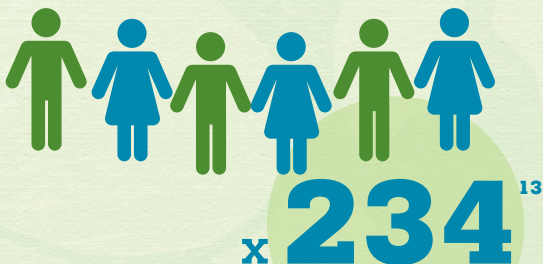
Food banks often are called upon to distribute food items to victims of natural disasters, such as hurricanes or volcanic eruptions.



MOBILE PANTRIES

In rural communities, access to transportation can be an issue. Some food banks have started offering mobile food distribution models to take food where people go, such as schools, community centers, and senior housing.

**152,677 RESIDENTS
IN POVERTY**



Weight in pounds is the most common measure used to assess foodbank activity. However, it obscures any information about quality. Historically, very little of what has been distributed through the food relief system is fresh food. It also ignores what should be the ultimate goal of anti-hunger organizations: to help people out of poverty—commonly referred to as “shortening the line.”

36 million lbs. FOOD NEED

19.5 million lbs. FOOD AID AVAILABLE

16.5 million lbs. UNMET FOOD NEED PER YEAR

Going Upstream: Systems-Based Solutions

Food relief is just one element of a larger, more complex food system. However, this component should not be overlooked if we are to build an equitable food system for Hawai'i's future.

Consumers

Low income consumers are wrongly assumed to have little buying power. Marketing attention to "local" food has typically overlooked low-income residents of Hawai'i because many local farmers need to recoup their high land and input costs with relatively expensive specialty products.

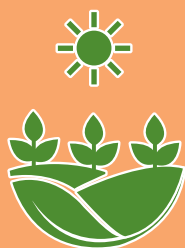


Institutions

Where markets fail, institutions often step in. Schools offer free and reduced-price meals to low-income students. Many food pantries are located in faith-based institutions. Both schools and churches are places where communities gather and recognize as places where they belong and connect with friends.

Distributors

Food banks and food pantries have devised many ways of distributing food to low-income constituents, but have only recently begun building programs and infrastructure to source directly from farmers. Other innovative distribution models, (such as food hubs and cooperatives) are becoming more popular, often with programs that specifically cater to low-income consumers.



Farmers *Why Local?*

THE AGRICULTURE CONNECTION

As the state moves to grow more of its own food, we may find ourselves limited by plantation-era political habits: the legacy of large-scale planning and top-down decision-making that cloud efforts to build a self-determined future. Yet a healthy food system involves both large and small-scale players – and the only food system on Hawai‘i that reliably fed up to one million residents was the traditional food system.

~K. Meter (2017)



RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The stronger the social and commercial bonds that cohere in a given community, the greater the economic multiplier will be. A local product cannot be traded locally unless the buyer and the seller are in contact with each other.

In 2016, Hawai‘i consumers spent as much as \$3.1 billion (85% of \$3.7 billion) purchasing food sourced off the Islands.¹⁴ **Replacing just 10% of these imported foods would lead to \$314 million in funds remaining in the State.** With multipliers, this could result in an additional \$50 million in earnings for farmers and the creation of up to 2,300 jobs.¹⁵



CULTURAL CAPITAL & WELLBEING

In Hawaiian tradition, health, food, and land are interrelated and interconnected. Growing food—whether through farming, community gardening, or ‘āina-based education—leads to a sense of place and belonging, stewardship of resources, and the tradition of sharing what is available at hand.



SOCIAL CAPITAL

Close connections between growers and consumers improves consumer awareness and promotes community agency. “Only if food is grown in inclusive, community-based settings will **all residents** be able to assume they have access to proper foods.” ~Ken Meter (2017)

Federal Food Assistance as an Economic Stimulus



The proper question to ask of civic leaders, it seems to me, is, "How do we best build a local multiplier?" The answer is community foods.¹⁷

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)

The Cornerstone of the Nation's Nutrition Safety Net

Nearly one in five households in Hawai'i accept SNAP (formerly known as "food stamps").¹⁸ Although SNAP benefits are distributed to participants, the program is so much more than a federal handout: It's an economic stimulus. The real advantages of SNAP are the ones that are made to the larger community.

Here are just some of the positive things that SNAP does:



ALLEVIATES HUNGER AND FOOD INSECURITY

Freeing up income for other basic needs, such as housing, medical bills, and transportation.



STIMULATES LOCAL ECONOMIES

Every \$1 in SNAP leads to \$1.79 in economic activity.¹⁹



LIFTS FAMILIES OUT OF POVERTY

In 2012, SNAP took 74,000 Hawai'i residents (including 33,000 children) out of poverty.²⁰



FACILITATES DISASTER RESPONSE

The USDA distributes emergency SNAP (called D-SNAP) after natural disasters strike.

SNAP: A STIMULUS TO AGRICULTURE



\$1.6 MILLION IN SNAP WAS SPENT AT HAWAII FARMERS' MARKET IN 2016.



HOWEVER, **4** OUT OF **5** FARMERS' MARKETS IN HAWAII CURRENTLY DO NOT ACCEPT SNAP, SO THERE IS AMPLE ROOM FOR EXPANSION OF THIS OPPORTUNITY.

Economic Multiplier:

An economic multiplier is a calculation of the degree to which spending on one product or service causes people and organizations to spend on other things as a result.¹⁹

A dollar can have more than just the impact of the immediate purchase.

When a dollar circulates several times through the economy it creates additional commerce and income in the local value chain and beyond.

For example: if SNAP recipients purchase local produce, this means profits for the farmer, local retailer and distributor, and all the other businesses that farmer affects, such as farm suppliers, equipment providers, etc.

OVERALL HAWAII ECONOMIC BENEFIT 2017

TOTAL SNAP
PARTICIPANTS¹⁸

169,045

\$479.7M¹⁸

VALUE OF
BENEFITS

\$858.7M¹⁹

ECONOMIC
MULTIPLIER

ELIGIBLE
NON-PARTICIPANTS²²

32,920

\$93.4M¹⁹

LOST FED DOLLARS
(BENEFITS)

\$167.2M^{19,22}

LOST ECONOMIC
ACTIVITY

\$2,838
AVG. ANNUAL
BENEFITS/PERSON

Nutrition Incentives: Some farmers' markets have gone as far as offering SNAP shoppers dollar-for-dollar incentives when purchasing local fruits and vegetables, doubling their purchasing power. Called by various names, such as "Double Up Food Bucks," these programs are a win-win-win for farmers, retailers, and families, making them more popular than other initiatives that have sought to restrict SNAP purchases to healthy options. Although these often privately funded, a pilot federal program, known as the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) Program, has shown overwhelmingly positive results.

Several Hawaii'i farmers' markets have tried these programs, and KTA Super Stores is piloting a supermarket version, bringing this popular program even closer for SNAP users.



\$10 SNAP-EBT

=



\$20 VALUE OF
FRUITS & VEGGIES



Federal Food Assistance as an Economic Stimulus

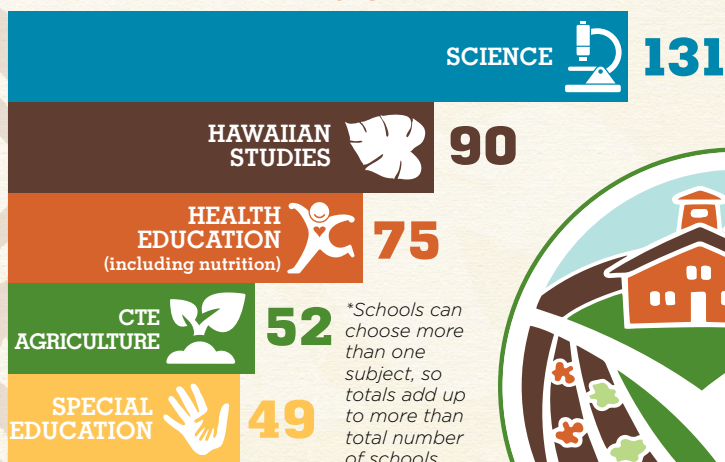
FARM TO SCHOOL

Say “school lunch” to most anyone across the nation and you’ll conjure images of fried, bland food microwaved or poured from a can. However, in Hawai‘i, a new wave of innovation is deflating this old cliché. Some students get almost half of their weekly meals at school, so Hawai‘i schools and food service companies are seeing an opportunity: to channel funds into the local economy, all while introducing students to fresh, healthy foods that they might not get to try at home.

CORE ELEMENTS OF FARM to SCHOOL

EDUCATION

Top 5 Subjects Taught in Gardens in Hawai‘i Public Schools 2016-17²³



PROCUREMENT

The Power of Procurement.

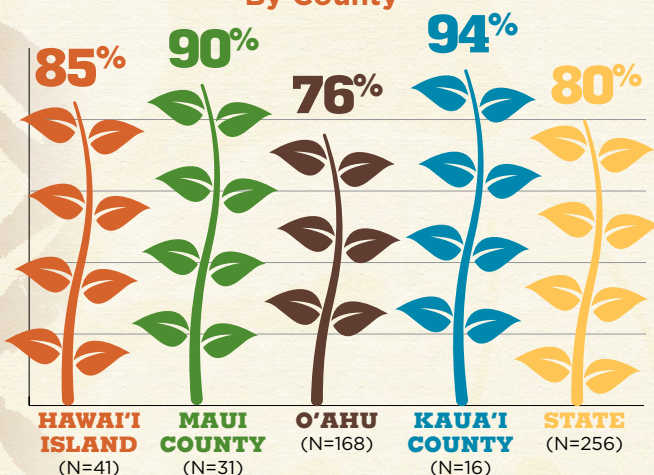
More than any other consumer group, institutions have tremendous buying power. All told, Hawai‘i draws down over **\$65 million** annually to purchase food through child nutrition programs (National School Lunch and Breakfast programs, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program).²⁴

100,000

Approximate number of meals served daily by the HDOE School Food Services Branch, making it the largest restaurant chain in the state.

SCHOOL GARDENS

% of Public Schools With Gardens Used for Instruction By County²³



FEEDING YOUNG MINDS

The Importance of School Meals

53%

The percent of public school students in Hawai‘i receiving free or reduced-cost meals (2016-17). For many of these students, school is the one place they can obtain nutritionally balanced meals.²⁵

STATE OF HAWAII SHOWS FARM TO SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Department of Agriculture (HDOA) Farm to School Program

In 2015, with strong support from the community, the Hawai'i State Legislature passed Act 218—codifying into law the existence of a farm to school program in the HDOA. The program expands Hawai'i's capacity to make progress towards shared goals of agriculture, education, and health. While national farm to school efforts focus on education, procurement, and school gardens, the HDOA program emphasizes the following five goals:

- 1) Improve student health,
- 2) Develop an educated agricultural workforce,
- 3) Enrich the local food system through the support and increase of local food procurement for the State's public schools and other institutions,
- 4) Accelerate garden and farm-based education for the State's public school students, and
- 5) Expand the relationships between public schools and agricultural communities.

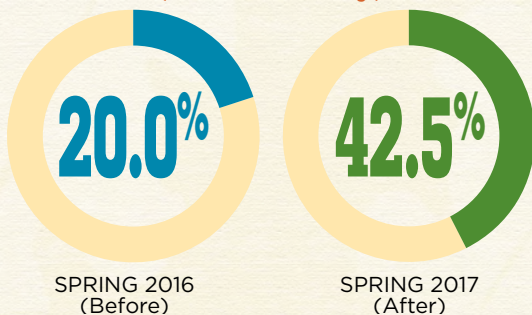


Department of Education (HIDOE) Farm to School Pilot Project

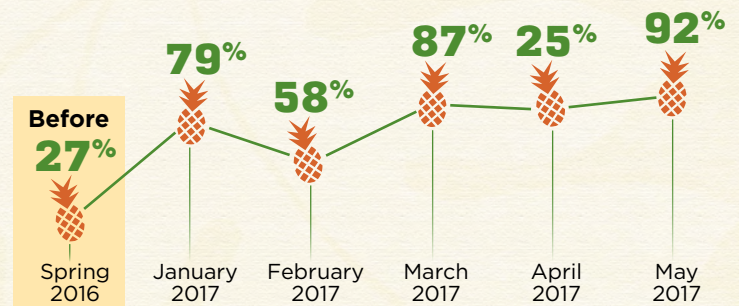
In 2016, a team of stakeholders, led by the Lieutenant Governor's office and the HIDOE, launched an ambitious initiative to offer more fresh, locally-grown food in schools. A national expert was contracted to work with the Kohala Complex kitchen to develop new menus that feature local ingredients, and to train kitchen staff in scratch cooking techniques. The HIDOE has already begun the next phase of the project at Mililani High School—the second largest school in the system—serving 2500 lunches a day.

HIDOE FARM TO SCHOOL PILOT IN KOHALA - BEFORE AND AFTER

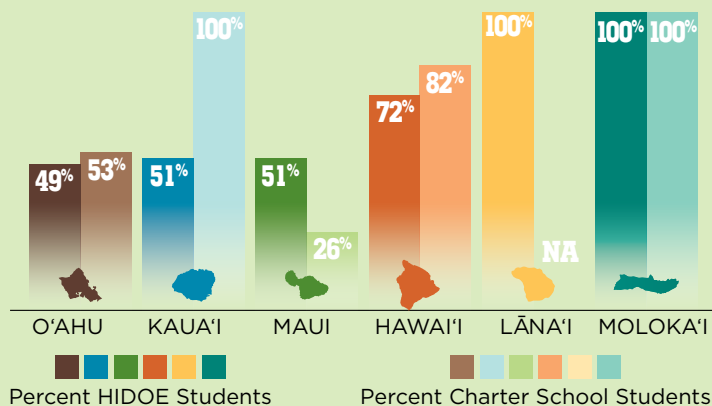
Increase in Local Product Purchasing (includes dairy)



Percentage of Fresh (Unprocessed) Foods (by total food expenditures)

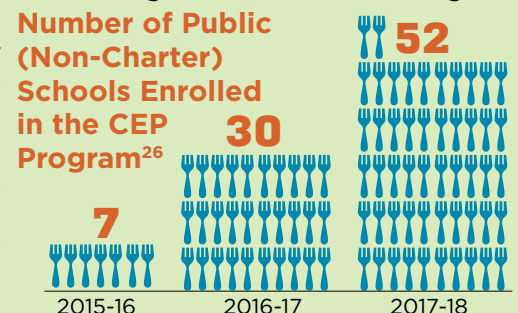


% of Students Receiving Free/Reduced Meals in the National School Lunch Program (2016-17 School Year, By Island)²⁵



FREE MEALS FOR ALL STUDENTS

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) covers the costs of free breakfast and lunch to all students in schools where more than 40% of the student population is "direct certified" (meaning they live in households receiving SNAP, or other emergency food assistance, or who have special circumstances such as homelessness or are runaways).



Building Community-Based Food Systems

HAWAI'I INSTITUTIONS THAT ARE LEADING THE WAY

With limited investment capital or public support available, several Hawai'i organizations have taken steps to build community-based food trade on their own. Food banks, community health centers, food hubs, schools, and educational nonprofits have begun constructing community-based food systems that engage low-income communities. Here are just a few examples:



Kōkua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services Kalihi, O'ahu

Staff at Kōkua Kalihi Valley (KKV) understand that—from an indigenous standpoint—food is medicine. This is one of the many reasons Roots Café was created at the KKV Wellness Center. Open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, it serves both staff and the community. The cafe works with 18 local farms (including their own community garden, Ho'oulu 'Āina) to produce quality meals that are priced to meet the budgets of the health center's clientele. Staff chefs even crafted an alternative to SPAM that has a similar taste, uses local pork, and has no chemical additives. As part of their quest to “decolonize diets,” they have found it is important to serve Polynesian carbohydrates such as taro, sweet potato, breadfruit, and tapioca.

Strategies include a closely interlaced set of initiatives: growing new farmers, growing and sharing food (especially in public housing communities), sharing knowledge, establishing a strong foundation of health within 'ohana (family) and communal structures, providing community culinary training and communal cooking activities, building and strengthening networks of reciprocal exchange, fostering Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) and other food access, and supporting community food entrepreneurs.



Sust'āinable Molokai Molokai

Sust'āinable Molokai's Food Security Program has been working to strengthen the connections between Molokai residents and food producers. The organization runs a food hub, which is a vendor for the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable (school snack) Program. This program offers federal reimbursements for local produce served directly to elementary school students, along with a brief lesson on the origin and nutritional value of the food. Sust'āinable Molokai has also partnered with local schools to develop a 2-acre permaculture farm where older students gain hands-on experience raising food in sustainable ways.

In 2016, Sust'āinable Molokai launched their Mobile Market, which delivers food grown by island farmers directly to local consumers, who can order food items online. Farmers can name their own product prices and post the quantities they have available each week. The Mobile Market also accepts EBT, so even those using federal nutrition assistance have access.



The Food Basket ***Hawai'i Island***

One key element of the work of The Food Basket on Hawai'i Island is its close and strategic collaboration with local growers. The food bank buys food from nearby farms to distribute to low-income residents as reduced-cost purchases through their "Da Box" CSA program.

The Food Basket has assumed the role of helping to build a community-based food system. This means they have worked closely with avocado and breadfruit growers, helping them to develop new markets and increase income. By connecting with these growers, The Food Basket has helped build a potent cluster of community food activity. One of the groups they support is a new 'ulu cooperative. This is an intriguing effort to take a traditional crop and package it for contemporary, commercial use.



Waipā Foundation ***Waipā, Kaua'i***

As a living-learning center, Waipā aims to inspire a deeper connection between people and the land through experiential, eco-cultural programs. Nearly 4,000 people of all ages participate in Waipā's programs, working, learning, and sometimes camping on the land. They often enjoy meals prepared from the produce they helped to grow.

Waipā also has on-site processing capacity. In 2015, Waipā completed construction on a commercial kitchen, poi mill, and indoor and outdoor meeting and cooking spaces. The kitchen is used by numerous food entrepreneurs from the community who sell retail (at farmers' markets) as well as wholesale. The new facilities are also utilized for culinary trainings and events, and as the center of weekly farm tours and dinners.



MA'O Organic Farms ***Wai'anae, O'ahu***

A community-based food growing and educational partnership, MA'O Farms operates a 24-acre organic farm that provides fresh, high-quality produce to some 40 restaurants and grocers in Honolulu. They also run a CSA that sells produce subscriptions to customers.

All farm operations are integrated into a single initiative for 15-25-year-olds, with experiential 'āinabased programs providing youth a pathway to college, careers, and leadership. The core program is the Youth Leadership Training program, a college-based internship that hires about 40 young people to work the land, learn about Hawaiian heritage, and advocate for a more just food system.

Key Findings



GENERAL FINDINGS

1. Hawai'i should commit to building community-based food systems, not just increased food production, so that all populations have access to fresh, healthy food.
2. Both small- and large-scale agricultural models are necessary. Large scale initiatives are more established and can draw resources to develop infrastructure and small-scale operations can adapt quickly to changing consumer needs and climate conditions.
3. Shifting to a community-based food system will require a shift in thinking: the point is to build communities by using inclusive processes, which will lead to an increase in local economic multipliers.
4. Hawai'i's cultural heritage is based on caring for land and water, farming and fishing, and sharing this food with others. This culture will thrive and be sustained through stewardship of 'āina and fostering mutual support.



AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

1. Agriculture in Hawai'i is vulnerable due to the focus on farms and natural resources as separate realms rather than as integrated and interdependent systems.
2. High land and input costs represent a significant barrier to existing and new farming enterprises. Due to development pressures most land in the islands is priced at values that cannot be supported through food production. Efforts to ensure permanent access to land at agricultural value for residents are needed.
3. Nonprofit or public ownership of enclaves for traditional food production should be set aside—and funded—for the continuing development of indigenous land management systems.
4. Housing is often not allowed on agricultural land which leads to increased vulnerability and decreased viability of farming operations.
5. Water access and water quality issues differ on each island and need to be addressed so that farms producing food for residents are prioritized.



AGGREGATION, PROCESSING & DISTRIBUTION

1. Infrastructure is lacking to complete value chains that connect local food producers to consumers.
2. Innovative community institutions, such as schools, food banks, and healthcare centers, have been filling in the gaps, leading the way in linking these value chains.



FOOD ACCESS & DEMAND

1. There is a strong market for food on the Islands. Hawai'i consumers spend over \$3 billion each year purchasing food sourced off the Islands. (Visitors and tourists are not included in this total.)
2. Low income residents are limited in their ability to access affordable, healthy food within the current system and will require permanent assistance unless the system is modified.
3. SNAP provides nearly \$500 million annually in purchasing power to low-income residents and currently provides a greater stimulus to Hawai'i's economy than farming itself.
4. Connecting residents to their food system through skills development and 'āina-based programs encourages them to choose and prepare fresh, local food.

Key Recommendations



GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Dedicate resources toward planning and building community-based food systems – not simply local food production – particularly within low-income communities.
2. Build a statewide network of community food system leaders.
3. Civic leaders should formally determine that access to healthy food is part of the public trust, and if necessary, pursue legislation to establish this in statute.
4. The Hawai'i Department of Health should monitor the social determinants of health as they change over time, so that the state and network always have current information.
5. The State should allocate consistent funding and incentivize private investment to support physical and social infrastructure for community-based food trade.
6. Hawai'i should be intentional about creating spaces for culturally-based food production, making them a permanent part of the agricultural landscape.

The state's most promising role would be to construct gradually, over several decades, the infrastructure that promotes a post-plantation food system. Food leaders in the state are most significantly limited by the prevailing infrastructure and its dedication to [high-end specialty and export crops]. As one interviewee put it, "What is [currently] economically sustainable is not where we need to go." ~Ken Meter, 2017



LEVERAGE FEDERAL FUNDS AS A RESOURCE

1. Capitalize on farm to school efforts to channel Child Nutrition Program funds into local agriculture
2. Through SNAP Outreach continue to increase SNAP enrollment to bring additional federal funding into Hawai'i's food system as an interim stimulus for equitable food access and local food system development.
3. Simplify the SNAP application process.
4. Extend SNAP Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) capacity to more farmers' markets.
5. Use USDA SNAP Employment and Training funds to build food system development skills in low-income communities.



INVEST STRATEGICALLY

1. Public-private funding should be dedicated to convening a network of community food leaders to conduct strategic planning, agree on broad, public goals, define common measures of success, and invest in an evaluation strategy.
2. Expand existing investment funds to encourage private and public investment in community food businesses and infrastructure.
3. Set aside research funds for community-based initiatives to explore emerging agricultural and food chain development opportunities.
4. Provide dedicated funding to assisting low-income communities in building their capacity for developing and operating food enterprises, including Native Hawaiian initiatives, to revive and refine traditional food systems.



Specific examples of infrastructure funding initiatives and other information can be found in Appendix E of the full report, online at www.crcworks.org/hifood.pdf.

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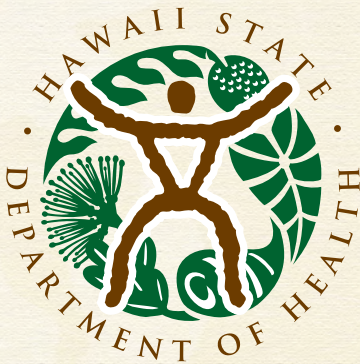
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A Very Special Mahalo To:

Ken Meter and Megan Phillips Goldenberg
Crossroads Resource Center

Their full report can be viewed at:
<http://www.crcworks.org/hifood.pdf>



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Hawai'i Department of Health

Published March 2018, Honolulu, Hawai'i

This publication was funded by the USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the USDA. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

